2. A ‘roll call’ of the labour movement: Harnessing labour participation

The Chile Solidarity Campaign’s strategy at the 1974 May Day rally was simple: assemble a strong contingent and move as close to the front as possible. The CSC was hoping that Lawrence Daly of the National Union of Mineworkers would mention Chile in his address, and they planned to hand out 15 000 copies of a special leaflet covering the situation of trade unions in Chile.¹

Like participation in May Day, trade union involvement in the movement of solidarity with Chile used a range of strategies familiar to any student of democratic politics in Britain, from mass demonstrations to petitions. Union involvement in the Chile campaign was not just financial with a representative aspect as described in the previous chapter. Union actions for Chile were primarily indirect and predominantly led by groups of individuals outside the trade unions. Trade unions often relied on this particular type of indirect action in order to fulfil their internationalist obligations, and the CSC exploited the opportunistic and resource-optimising nature of British trade unions to garner support for their cause. As such, the relationship was symbiotic. Interestingly, the actions described in this chapter were taken in the style of both industrial national and social movement unionism, often at the same time.

Although the origins and machinations of the first anniversary demonstration have already been explained in the previous chapter, its essential features as a public ritual are typical of many others and are worth lingering over in detail. The establishment of artistic and cultural activities, including banner making, mural painting and the use of music are, is explored in this chapter, highlighting the blend of labour tradition with social movement and new left strategy. As well as these group expressions of solidarity, the chapter will also explore the more intimate ‘adopt a prisoner’ program and specially organised conferences as methods of mobilising action using existing union structures.

With the establishment of the CSC came an annual calendar of events that revolved around significant Chilean and labour movement dates. Navy Day in Chile is marked on 21 May, and is important in the relationship between Britain and Chile. Lord Cochrane, a British citizen, was the commander-in-chief of the Chilean Navy during the War of Independence in the nineteenth century and

¹ CSC Executive Committee: Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday April 11 1974 at Seven Sisters, CSC, CSC/1/3, LHASL, Manchester.
it is traditional for Chilean Navy officers to travel to London to lay a wreath at the foot of his tomb in Westminster Abbey each May. This became one focus of campaigning. The anniversaries of the September coup were, however, what became most prominent in the calendar of protest. For the left in general and trade unions in particular, demonstrations and marches were a part of the existing repertoire of political action. The organisation of demonstrations was a canny move on the part of the CSC, as it required little organisational output for the unions to participate and lend mass support to the cause. The CSC was part of a social movement yet it harnessed a traditional strategy of the old left and coopted unions through their industrial national structure. It is a supreme example of the manner in which abstract models of unionism were blended in practice.

On the night of Saturday, 14 September 1974, at the Trade Union Centre in Carlton Place, Glasgow, protestors gathered. At 11.30 pm, they stepped aboard a coach that travelled through the night to London. Some hours later, on another side of the country, 200 Yorkshire miners started their journey towards the capital, and about the same time a train left Liverpool full of demonstrators. In Oxford, the local CSC filled two coaches of travellers. From South Wales, a train carrying 400 miners travelled through the morning, led by five members of the Merthyr AUEW and five more representatives from the Merthyr Communist Party.

At 1 pm on Sunday, 15 September 1974, 10 000 people assembled at Speakers’ Corner in Hyde Park. This was not a motley mix of citizens churning together, but a highly choreographed, large-scale statement. The CSC stewards divided the march into four sections, demonstrating the broadest support possible from the British labour movement for the people of Chile.

The speakers were at the head of the march, including the executive of the TGWU, who walked in front of the Chile Solidarity Campaign Committee banner (carried...
on one side by Mike Gatehouse) and MPs Judith Hart and Martin Flannery. Then there were nine Chilean flags, followed in turn by the Chile Lucha banner and the London Co-Op Political Committee. Policemen in overcoats and helmets in lines on each side of the protestors restrained the demonstration.

More impressive than the head of the march was its body, which was made up of unionists from all over the country. The TGWU was the first of the union section, followed by the NUM contingent. Their traditional banners held aloft, the miners marched to ‘the beat of a single bass drum in the prize-winning Llyd Coed brass band’. Next, the AUEW marched, then the NATSOPA. Actors Equity marched with the Electrical, Electronic, Telecommunications and Plumbing Union (EETPU) and then the Post Officers along with AUEW TASS. There were then more than 30 trades council contingents with banners. Shop stewards from Rolls Royce and Leyland came as well, with their 2 metre-wide banners.

The last section of the demonstration was reserved for political parties (note that this was behind the trade unions). The International Socialists’ delegation held their own rally in Hyde Park, then followed on to the national demonstration, joining the final section. The International Marxist Group also sent a delegation but the largest of all was the Communist Party, with more than 100 banners from constituencies all over the country. The Labour Party was represented by 50 constituency and Labour Party Young Socialists contingents, which flew

---

8 *Chile Fights 9* (London: CSC [Chile Lucha], 1974).
9 *Chile Fights 9*.
11 *Chile Fights 9*.
12 Campbell, ‘Chile’s Torturers Stand Accused’.
13 ‘The exceptionally strong trade-union turn-out suggested that the Campaign’s work with the trade union during the year had been well received.’ *CSC. Executive Committee: Analysis of Campaign Performance to Date; Chile Fights 9*.
14 Campbell, ‘Chile’s Torturers Stand Accused’.
in the face of the BLP Executive’s decision to not sponsor the rally. Added to this were the International Brigade and bodies of workers from Spain, Italy, Portugal and Ireland.\footnote{Chile Fights 9.}
A 'roll call' of the labour movement: Harnessing labour participation

Figure 2.2 Anniversary demonstration, September 1976, London.

Source: Photographer unknown, 'Great Show of Solidarity with Chile', Morning Star, 13 September 1974, courtesy of the Marx Memorial Library.
Martin Gostwick reported in the *Morning Star*:

Car workers and boilermakers, vehicle builders and railwaymen, building workers and construction men, co-operators, miners, Labour Party members and Communists filed by in a seemingly endless stream.

Engineers and steelworkers, blast furnacemen, farm workers, journalists and print workers—the march from Hyde Park to Trafalgar Square was like a roll call of the British labour movement.16

Some walked silently, some chanted. They advanced up Oxford Street, turning at Regent Street, through Haymarket before entering Trafalgar Square. The crowd streamed into the square to the sounds of Inti Illimani singing *Venceremos* (*We Will Triumph*).

The first speaker was the widow of Salvador Allende, Madame Hortensia Allende. An immaculate and glamorous woman, her crisp clothing, coiffured hair, bejewelled fingers, flawless make-up and silk scarf tied to a bow about her neck remained seemingly untouched by the rain that fell on the crowd. She thanked the trade unionists of East Kilbride, Rosyth and Liverpool.17 Ken Gill (AUEW TASS) also spoke, stating that the Chilean experience provided a lesson to the British left when confronting fascism: they must stay united.18 Harald Edelstam received a ‘mighty ovation’ in thanks for the lives of Chilean refugees he had saved in his swift actions as Swedish Ambassador to Chile after the coup.19

The steps on which the speakers stood were full, with the eight members of Inti Illimani, the speakers, translators and executive members of unions who felt they had the right to be represented on the platform. It was not only unionists’ personal ideological commitment that compelled them to be present. It was also a manifestation of the alliance between their unions and the social movement: the presence of unionists at this rally was a typical example of their involvement in indirect political action. The rally was organised externally to the unions, but fully embraced by them. Their presence at this traditional-style event was a part of their duty as good unionists. Union delegations would continue to attend anniversary demonstrations under the obligation of their affiliation until the dictatorship fell.

---

17 Davies, ‘Remember Allende’.
18 Bob McCluskey (National Union of Seamen: NUS) and Neil Kinnock (BLP) also spoke.
19 Campbell, ‘Chile’s Torturers Stand Accused’. Edelstam spent lots of time in Britain after the coup, and attended many rallies and presentations as well as delegations to the foreign office and so on. I believe this is because his children were attending British public schools.
Figure 2.3 ‘Señora Salvador Allende speaking before a mass rally in support of Chilean resistance, Trafalgar Square, London, 15 September 1974. Organised by the British Joint Labour Movement and the Chile Solidarity Campaign. In the foreground are trade union banners and in the background Chile Vencera banner by John Dugger of AFD.’

Source: Brian Nicholson can be seen in blue shirt and black jacket immediately below the image of Salvador Allende. *Arts Festival for Democracy in Chile*, CSC, CSC/12/1, LHASC, Manchester.
As Inti Illimani moved forward to sing for the final time, the crowd huddled together for warmth. The musicians sang, in front of them a sea of faces and banners, behind them on the steps was a huge strip banner. John Walker described the banner: ‘Its vivid expanses of red and blue and its highly simplified figures appeared modern in comparison to the more Victorian style of the British trade union banners among the crowd.’

The monumental strip banner, described as ‘an anti-fascist artwork’, was specially constructed for the 1974 demonstration. It was called ‘Chile Vencerá (sic)’ (‘Chile will overcome’). The banner was, according to the artist, ‘a blend of Californian mural painting and traditional British trade union or Baptist Church banner making’. The symbolism of its content was important because, unlike art hung in a gallery, the practice of displaying banners behind speakers meant the audience viewed the piece for a relatively long time, as rallies would often last hours.

It had 10 figures: two copper miners, a fisherman, a foundry worker, two campesinos (farm workers), one of whom was an armed woman collecting eggs, a metal worker, a medical worker, a ‘cultural worker’ with a gun and a guitar modelled on Victor Jara and an education worker with a book from which the words ‘Chile lucha!’ (‘Chile fights!’) rise. The artist advised that the message told of the ‘need to organise collectively to overthrow fascism and includes the principle of solidarity to those engaged in a struggle against a military fascism, namely—the dual nature of our support, “for food and guns”’. This reflects the belief that there was strong resistance in Chile (there was not), and quite possibly the radical involvement of the artist or those with whom he consulted in the drafting process. The artist, John Dugger, was certainly aware of liberation struggles as well as conditions in the Third World and he also had a keen interest in the British trade union banner traditions. Dugger considered

21 Notes on the Big Chile Vencerá Banner (Profiles and Analysis), 1976, CSC, CSC/12/1, LHASC, Manchester.
22 Dugger in: *Banner Arts Project, Patrick Johnson*, 1976, CSC, CSC/12/2, LHASC, Manchester.
24 Notes on the Big Chile Vencerá Banner (Profiles and Analysis). ‘Chile Lucha!’ can also be translated as ‘Chile fight!’ (a command).
26 Dugger visited China in the early 1970s and was heavily influenced by Mao. Walker, *Left Shift*, 87.
27 In 1971 Dugger and Medalla had formed the Artists Liberation Front, the slogan of which was ‘socialist art through socialist revolution’. Their banner consisted of the slogan with the images of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao. Dugger, along with Cecilia Vicuña, Guy Brett and David Medalla, was a founding member of Artists for Democracy in Chile, which was established in the Royal College of Art in 1974. Artists for Democracy held a two-week exhibition in September 1974 in London and was able to garner high-level support such as from Judith Hart, Harold Edelstam and Alvaro Bunster. Dugger and Medalla would go on to form a banner studio. Dugger was later employed by the Greater London Council, from 1983 to 1985, as a banner maker. Lucy Lippard, ‘Spinning the Common Thread’, *A World of Poetry*, accessed 3 June 2008, <http://www.worldofpoetry.org/cv_t2.htm>; Walker, *Left Shift*, 86, 204; *Chile Fights 9*; ‘John Dugger born
banners of this type to be a ‘portable-mural-without walls’. He believed murals were a cheap way to bring art to the people. The *Chile Vencera* banner was his first monumental strip banner, a form in which he would go on to specialise. It was also a rich symbol of the marriage of the labour movement and trade union traditions with new innovations of the social movement.

Making the banner was a long process that started with sketches and moved through various prototype phases until finally the templates were cut out of canvas and appliquéd onto the strips. The banner was then embroidered. The strips allowed for the use of machines and industrial thread, and created a sturdy banner. The final version of the banner was ‘laid out and assembled, [and] cut into 20 strips’ on the first anniversary of the coup, 11 September 1974. The banner alone weighed 23 kg, but with its trunk, the two 18 m rigging ropes and the 42 coloured tassels, it weighed 32 kg. It was roughly 5 m high and 7.5 m wide.

The September 1974 rally had 10 000 participants, though in his report Dugger estimated that 20 000 people viewed the banner on that day. After the 1974 demonstration it was used at the Labour Party rally in September 1975. Following this, early in 1976, the banner started its transnational journey when it was sent to the United States and used for an Inti Illimani concert in San Francisco. It then spent May Day in Berkeley at La Peña Cultural Centre. The banner returned to Britain for the September 1976 rally. Dugger estimated there were approximately 65 000 viewers of the banner over this time: it was a mobile monument to Chile solidarity.

Pedro Cornejo (CUT) declared a different piece of art to be ‘a magnificent token of solidarity with our people’. It was a mural commissioned by the AUEW. Maureen Scott was the chosen artist. According to the AUEW, the mural

---


29 Dugger (in his ‘Banner Arts’ project phase) was later commissioned by the CSC to produce a 5 m x 3.7 m banner based on a patchwork design. It hung at the Albert Hall concert in 1978. *CSC Annual Report, 1978*, CSC, CSC/1/13, LHASC, Manchester.

30 *Banner Arts Project, Patrick Johnson, 1976*.

31 Ibid.

32 Mme Allende also spoke. Mme Allende wore a white coat in 1974. At the 1976 rally there is no Salvador Allende banner present in the foreground of the photos.

33 *Banner Arts Project, Patrick Johnson, 1976*.

34 Cornejo (CUT) to Boyd (AUEW), August 2 1976, CSC, CSC/32/3, LHASC, Manchester.
portrayed ‘the present plight of the Chilean people and the struggle of the workers to restore democracy in their country’. Scott had trained at Plymouth College of Arts and her practice focused on workers and trade unions.

The style of the painting recalled that of Mexican muralists. Its rectangle was tightly packed with figures. Pinochet dominated the centre of the picture in his sunglasses and, below him, in a river of blood, flowed the bodies of his victims. At his shoulders were two figures, a skeleton in the junta uniform and a combat soldier. Allende appeared, looking older than when he passed away, bleeding in a bottom corner. Above Pinochet, a larger figure looked to the heavens, his face obscured both by the angle of this action and by the fact that the painting cut half of it off. He appeared to be straining against chains around his wrists. At the bottom of the painting, people of various races marched holding ‘the flame of resistance’. The whole painting seemed to be set in an amphitheatre—perhaps a reference to the stadiums that were used as holding pens for prisoners. In the background of the painting, sitting starkly against the blue sky, there were red banners, which stuck up like rocks. Upon them were union slogans.

When it was unveiled in the council chamber of the AUEW at the Peckham Road offices, the former Chilean ambassador Alvaro Bunster spoke at the event, along with Luis Pavez of the CUT. Ken Hulme, trade union organiser for the CSC, was also present, along with John Boyd (who features in Chapter Four) and Hugh Scanlon, with Elaine Nicholson interpreting. Pedro Cornejo of the CUT wrote to Boyd shortly after the mural was unveiled requesting permission to use the image of the mural on a postcard to raise money and to advertise solidarity. Cornejo also requested a number of photos of the mural to use in pamphlets, and ‘it may even be possible for us to smuggle a few copies to Chile, so that our comrades there can see direct evidence of the solidarity of British working people’.

---

35 Ibid.
37 Ibid., 218.
38 Luis Pavez was a construction worker who sought exile in the United Kingdom. ‘Chile’s wall of resistance’ Labour Weekly, 1976, CSC, CSC/7/9, LHASC, Manchester; Gatehouse to Roberts (AUEW), June 6 1976, CSC, CSC/32/6, LHASC, Manchester.
39 The AUEW devoted the back page of the August 1976 edition of its journal to the unveiling of the mural (the same month the export of war frigates was granted. See Chapter 4). CSC-Exec 26.8.76 Minutes, CSC, CSC/1/10, LHASC, Manchester.
40 Cornejo was announced as the CUT representative in Britain. He was originally adopted when still a prisoner by NUPE Hammersmith. Chile Solidarity Campaign, Chile and the British Labour Movement, 14.
41 Cornejo (CUT) to Boyd (AUEW), August 2 1976.
Despite this enthusiasm, art and design historian John Walker said, ‘while there is no doubt about the artist’s emotional sincerity, the mural’s pictorial rhetoric was antiquated’.\textsuperscript{42} Walker goes on to say that ‘one of [the mural’s] aims was to foster solidarity among trade unionists around the world in the hope that they would use their power to mount an international blockade of Chile’s commerce’.\textsuperscript{43} In this respect, the mural was a failure, as shortly after its unveiling it disappeared into

\textsuperscript{42} Walker, \textit{Left Shift}, 218.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.
the museum of the AUEW. It was a gesture of solidarity, dripping in symbolism and of itself very unlikely to change the situation in Chile. It was an indirect action and an expression of the internationalism of the AUEW.

Other artistic undertakings of the Chile solidarity movement included exhibitions, but more prominently, music concerts. All over the world the protest music of Chile became an integral part of the Chile solidarity movement as it had been for the Allende Government. For many years a cultural committee existed within the CSC, functioning as a semi-autonomous body, while still being held underneath its rubric. The Cultural Committee was unofficially affiliated with Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (MIR: Movement of the Revolutionary Left), one of the more extremist groupings in Chilean politics. This occurred in part because the actors and artists who arrived in Britain as refugees were mostly miristas. Most of the activists involved in the Chile campaign were CPGB members and the differing ideologies, along with linguistic problems, caused some tension. Gatehouse, secretary of the CSC, freely admitted the importance of the cultural committee’s activities, but noted there were always difficulties with them due to their extreme affiliates. ‘The differences were never quite explicitly phrased, but they were apparent’, he recalled.

The biggest and most remembered music concerts were not organised by that committee. The group which organised the bigger concerts was formed when Joan Jara arrived back in Chile with her daughters. At its centre was Peggy Kessel. She was a Hampstead intellectual, involved in pre-coup solidarity with Chile through the Association for British–Chilean Friendship. She had organised concerts for Vietnam and was, in 1974, working at the National Theatre. Soon after the Chile coup broke, she foresaw the need for an anniversary concert and booked Queen Elizabeth Hall. Members of the high-profile Chilean groups

---

44 Minutes. Meeting of Executive Council, held in General Office, on the 13th July, 1976 at 10.00 a.m., Amalgamated Engineering Union, MSS.259/AEU/1/1/224, MRC, UW, Coventry.
45 Including exhibitions of posters, photos and patchwork from within Chile, made by exiles or circulated by the international solidarity movement.
46 Sometimes called the Agit-Cultural Committee in documents (where ‘agit’ is short for agitation). It was established in an ad-hoc manner to organise the Chile Festival of March 1974. Report from the Cultural Committee of the CSC to the Campaign Executive. May 9th. 1974, CSC, CSC/1/3, LHASC, Manchester.
47 The adherents of MIR were among the only Chileans to undertake any form of armed resistance to the junta.
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid.
51 Joan Jara was the widow of Chilean new song artist Victor Jara, who was murdered in the first days of the regime. Roger Burbach, The Pinochet Affair: State Terrorism and Global Justice (London: Zed Books, 2003), 57.
52 Kessel was entrenched in the Hampstead artistic and acting community (CPGB).
53 New Chile, March/April 1973 p. 8, CSC, CSC/7/1, LHASC, Manchester; Association for British–Chilean Friendship, 1972, Etheridge Papers: Longbridge Shop Stewards, MSS.202/SJ3/3/2/166, MRC, UW, Coventry.
54 Gatehouse Interview, 2007.
which toured, Inti Illimani and Quilapayun, were predominantly Chilean Communist Party affiliates and for that reason Kessel was a more appropriate organiser than the MIR-aligned cultural committee.  

Gatehouse remembered that Kessel was a ‘formidable woman; she was absolutely terrifying to work for’. Gatehouse remembered that Kessel was a ‘formidable woman; she was absolutely terrifying to work for’. She was so efficient she had a letterhead printed on which to write her Chile concert correspondence, and she promised the concert would be ‘an evening of moving, but highly professional entertainment, such as is rarely found in London’. The first large-scale concert was on 16 September 1974 and neatly coincided with Mme Allende’s tour and the first anniversary demonstration. Mme Allende was present along with Inti Illimani, Isabel Parra, Joan Jara and other British artists. The concert was titled ‘Inti Illimani Sing for Chile’ and proceeds were to go to the Chile Relief Fund (connected with the CCHR). Kessel gained the sponsorship of a string of church officials, as well as left personalities, such as Dame Peggy Ashcroft and Adrian Mitchell. Eight Labour MPs put their names forward as sponsors.

The success of the music concerts, which produced empathy and sympathy despite the language barrier, led to various performances being held throughout the 1970s. One of the biggest was the 7 March 1978 concert, featuring Pete Seeger and Quilapayun. It was patronised by 13 Labour MPs and was supported by various personalities such as Michael Palin. Behind the stage was a banner made by John Dugger’s Banner Arts Project, with the words (in Spanish) ‘Never give in or stray from the road’. The advertising space in the program was sold to raise money. Many unions purchased space, but all were outdone by the TGWU colour advertisement that took up the whole back cover (see Figure 2.5). It seems like an inconsequential detail, but by appealing for sponsorship of such easily supportable events the Chile movement harnessed labour movement power

---

55 Ibid.
56 Ibid.
57 Ibid.
58 After the concert, Mme Allende, Judith Hart, Steve Hart, Alex Kitson, Alf Lomas and George Anthony were invited to dine at the house of the Cuban ambassador. Gira en Gran Bretana. Septiembre 1974.
59 Ibid.
60 Kessel re: A Concert in aid of Chile Relief Fund Inti Illimani Sing For Chile, 1974, TUC, MSS.292D/980.31/4, MRC, UW, Coventry.
61 Ibid.
62 The concert was organised by Chilean Records for the CSC and the Chile Relief Fund. Chile Solidarity Campaign (UK), Pete Seeger and Quilapayun: In Concert for Chile (London: London Caledonian Press, 1978).
63 Nunca te entregues ni te apartes del camino. Ibid.
64 The unions included Society of Graphical and Allied Trades (SOGAT), AUEW, CPSA, NUPE, Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers (USDAW), NATFHE, Iron and Steel Trades Confederation (ISTC), NGA, National Union of Dyers, Bleachers and Textile Workers (NUDBTW) and TGWU. Other concerts included: Inti Illimani and John Williams at the Dominion Theatre; Inti Illimani, Quilapayun, Isabel Parra and Patricio Castillo at Royal Albert Hall (30 September 1975; 3800 people attended); and Quilapayun and Bert Jansch, Theatre Royal (25 September 1977). CSC, ‘Inti Illimani, John Williams in Concert for Chile,’ (Manchester). Local Committees Newsletter No. 14, 24.9.75, CSC, CSC/44/1, LHASC, Manchester; Chile Fights 25 (London: CSC [Chile Lucha], 1977); Annual General Meeting London. February 7 1976. Secretary’s Report.
with comparatively little work. The symbiotic relationship was manifested as
the unions also managed to fill internationalist prerogatives and sections of their
journals with little effort.

Figure 2.5 The front and back pages of the Pete Seeger and Quilapayun
concert program. The image on the front page is the Banner Arts banner
that was suspended behind the singers. The back cover is a full-page
advertisement from the TGWU.

Source: This copy of the program was signed by Pete Seeger. He wrote as a greeting ‘Mayibuye Africa’,
which was one of the rallying cries of the anti-apartheid movement. Chile Solidarity Campaign (UK), Pete
Seeger and Quilapayun.

The strategic cultural achievements of the Chile campaign then migrated to the
Nicaragua and El Salvador campaigns, which took cultural integration to new
levels. Activist Diane Dixon remembered that CSC ‘essentially gave birth to the
other solidarity movements’.65 Another strategy that found success in many
solidarity campaigns after accomplishment with the Chile movement was the
adoption of prisoners, a program that was administered by the CCHR.66

65 Interview with Diane Dixon (Chile activist, Scottish human rights campaigner, CPGB), 4 September 2007
[hereinafter Dixon Interview, 2007], copy in possession of author.
66 For a time, they also ran an adopt-a-town program, but this was not as successful. This program was
separate from the ‘town twinning’ program that was encouraged through CSC local committees. CSC Annual
Report, 1976; Chile: the tide has turned Annual Report, 1983, CSC, CSC/1/13, LHASC, Manchester.
The CCHR was a registered charity which ran out of 1 Cambridge Terrace, London. The CCHR focused on human rights and aimed to work with a broader range of groups than the CSC. They did this by remaining ‘non-political’ and attempting to harness church and human rights groups as well as labour movement support. The CCHR worked (more than the CSC) closely with the Committee of Peace, followed by the Vicariate of Solidarity in Chile and other human rights organisations such as Amnesty International (British Section). There were times when some groups within the solidarity movement pushed for the CCHR and CSC to combine forces for more productive use of activist resources, but this was always resisted because the political nature of the CSC would have led to the loss of some CCHR supporters and vice versa.

The adopt-a-prisoner program had a high level of labour movement involvement and was supported and pushed by the CSC. The Chile campaign admitted that the adoption program was ‘perhaps the most important activity we engage upon for maintaining and projecting the issue of Chile into the British labour movement’. Participants wrote letters to the prisoners and often to their families, offering moral and sometimes financial support, and from time to time a prisoner was offered work to help obtain a visa for Britain. Chilean and British authorities were also contacted and articles were published in union journals and newspapers to keep members informed of progress. Sometimes, unions were misinformed when the snippets of information that made it to Britain were pieced together incorrectly. Tom Pilford, however, of the London County Association of Trades Councils, when giving advice to unions considering adopting a prisoner, said: ‘you have to keep on plodding, even if you do make a mistake.

Success in adoption could be a long process drawn out over many months and perhaps years, with multiple letters to representatives in Chile and Britain. John Fairley of the Ladbroke House Branch of the National Association of Teachers described the process of making contact with a prisoner as taking

---

67 Affiliates’ Newsletter No. 21, June 12 1977, CSC, CSC/1/12, LHASC, Manchester; Reg Williams (CPSA) to CPSA Branches, 24 November 1978, CSC, CSC/11/7, LHASC, Manchester.
68 The CCHR newsletter distribution list was to 10 000 people. Wilkinson, ‘The Influence of the Solidarity Lobby on British Government Policy towards Latin America’.
71 CSC-AGM 19.02.77 Minutes.
73 Sample letters in English and Spanish were sent to each adopting organisation by the CCHR as part of a guidelines pack drawn up with the help of Amnesty International. Chile Committee for Human Rights: Report on Adoption Scheme, April 1976, CSC, CSC/31/1, LHASC, Manchester.
75 Tom Pilford: Chairman, Greater London Association of Trades Councils, 1976, CSC, CSC/11/4, LHASC, Manchester.
76 Contact was not guaranteed and much of the time did not occur; see, for example: ‘Avon’s adopted Chilean Freed,’ Public Service, April 1976, CSC, CSC/28/9, LHASC, Manchester.
about five months. Once established, they kept up a relatively steady stream of letters with the prisoner. It was published in the journal of the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NATFHE) that 'the first clear result of our Branch work shone through from the tone of our prisoner’s letters themselves: our involvement in and concern for his case clearly boosting the prisoner’s morale and giving him some hope even in his distressing circumstances’.77

Further, the lifting of the individual’s morale had an expansive effect, for, as Pilford put it, ‘the grape vine is great and it is going round the prisons that the people of England are concerned about them’.78 In November 1976, the CCHR received news from Chile that one sole prisoner in the Osorno Penitentiary was not adopted when all his prison mates were. A member of the CCHR wrote that ‘obviously, he is very sad and this confirms, how important the work of adoptions is emotionally’.79 His adoption was quickly confirmed.

The adoption process sometimes resulted in very direct and personal contact with Chilean citizens. Receiving a letter from an incarcerated trade unionist in Chile was a moving event in a trade union meeting, and served to mobilise them further.80 For example, a letter from Benito Sanchez Muñoz of Lota in southern Chile surely provoked such a reaction. He was a miner of only twenty-three years of age who had been general secretary of the Young Socialists in his town. He wrote to the Scottish Area NUM, which had adopted him, begging for aid: ‘I fear that this letter won’t reach you, but I’m taking the chance … I beg you to see what could be done for my wife and my little girl. I do not dare to tell you all the things which has happened to us.’81

Pilford described how the adoption of another young prisoner led to contact with his parents, who sent the Electrical Trades Union his thumbprint, his identification cards, his photograph, his military service record, a photograph of him with Allende and a letter from the local military authorities stating that he had good behaviour while incarcerated.82 With such stories and moments, it is easy to see how the program effectively ‘personalised the issues’.83 If an adoption such as this was ultimately successful and the prisoner made their way to Britain, the effect on the trade unionists could not ‘be over-stated’.84

---

77 “Adopting” a Chilean Prisoner,’ NATFHE Tech Journal 2, March 1978, CSC, CSC/7/14, LHASC, Manchester.
78 Tom Pilford: Chairman, Greater London Association of Trades Councils, 1976.
79 As it turned out, he had already been adopted by the Glasgow 7/194 Branch of the TGWU. The CCHR prompted Doug Bain (Chile Human Rights Committee, Glasgow) to chase this up, and soon the prisoner’s sentence was commuted. The prisoner accepted an offer to go into exile in Scotland. Magali (CCHR) to Bain, 2 November 1976, Sandy Hobbs Papers, TGWU, GCUA, Glasgow.
80 Suggestions for Local Committees re: Trade Union Work, 1976.
81 Mellado Torres to Jose, 27th January, 1975, Sandy Hobbs Papers, NUM, GCUA, Glasgow.
82 Tom Pilford: Chairman, Greater London Association of Trades Councils, 1976.
84 Suggestions for Local Committees re: Trade Union Work, 1976.
Despite the commitment of unionists and the rolling success of the program, not all adoptions were successful and in some cases the strategy backfired. For example, the mother of dual citizen William Beausire, herself an ex-detainee, appealed to the CCHR to stop using the incarcerated Beausire as an example, because the publicity could be damaging to him. Similarly, Sheila Cassidy noted that one of her fellow prisoners in Tres Álamos was returned for more torture in Villa Grimaldi whenever her name was mentioned in a foreign newspaper. Cassidy maintained that ‘these reprisals, however, were a small price to pay for the knowledge that her death would not pass unnoticed, and ultimately the unflagging efforts of thousands of people in the free world were rewarded, for in December 1976 she was released from prison and expelled from Chile’. 

The Civil and Public Services Association (CPSA) was a particularly successful adopter, with all three of its adoptees freed by 1978. The third of these was Jose Gonzalez Salas, who had been imprisoned without trial for three years. Salas was in his early twenties. As is the custom in Chile, all young men are required to undertake military service after finishing secondary school and his started in 1974, only three months after the coup. During this time the military intelligence attempted to bribe him to join their ranks, but he refused their advances.

---

85 The Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) Youth Advisory Committee sent a letter of strong resolution on their adoptee to the Chilean Embassy in 1979. The embassy replied that in terms of the disappeared persons, ‘your concern is appreciated but it is doubtful that your adopting a missing person can really help with the enquiries’. The STUC Youth Committee consistently resolved very strongly for Chile. The STUC Women’s Committee only did so in 1974 and 1977. Berguno (Charge d’Affaires of Chile) to Harrison (STUC YAC), 17 May 1979, STUC, STUCA 475, GCUA, Glasgow.
86 See, for example: Jonathon Power, Amnesty International: The Human Rights Story (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 2001), 34; David Cross, ‘British Seek Truth on Missing Man’, The Times, 18 November 1981; Clifford Longley, ‘Prisoners of Conscience; Chile: William Beausire’, The Times, 28 July 1978; ‘MPs Call on Carter to Help Briton in Chile’, Guardian [Manchester], 7 May 1977; Burbach, The Pinochet Affair, 109. Among those used to deflect attention for the Beausire case was Excequiel Ponce Vicencio, a unionist on the docks (see <http://www.memoriaviva.com> for more information on his detention) and Ricardo Lagos (who would go on to become President of Chile in the 1990s). In 1975 Susie Carstairs of the CCHR reported that they were going to attempt to move away from ‘VIP’ prisoners and shift the focus to lesser-known prisoners. New guidelines had been made, and all letters to Chile would be siphoned through the CCHR due to the ‘risks involved’. CCHR, July 30th 1975 circular, Sandy Hobbs Papers, Box untitled, GCUA, Glasgow; CSC Committee Meeting at Liverpool. 8.2.75, CSC, CSC/1/5, LHASC, Manchester.
88 ‘Our sponsored Chilean prisoner released,’ CPSA Red Tape 1978, CSC, CSC/7/14, LHASC, Manchester.
Figure 2.6 1979: A delegation to the Foreign Office, which sought reassurances on the safety of William Beausire. From left: Jim Richardson (NATFHE), Peter Holt (National Association of Local Government Officers), Reg Williams (Civil and Public Services Association), Gordon McLellan (CPGB), Joan Lestor (BLP), Frank Dobson (BLP), Owen O’Brian (National Society of Operative Printers and Assistants), Mike Gatehouse. They hold a petition of 11 000 signatures urging Britain to refuse the return of the Ambassador to Chile and reject arms sales to the dictatorship.

Source: ‘Junta Victim May be Dead, Says Minister’, Morning Star, 12 September 1979, 3, courtesy of the Marx Memorial Library.
One day, 50 women were arrested and taken to the base in northern Chile. Among them was Salas’s girlfriend, who ‘was tortured and shot before his eyes’. Salas was then forced to watch the torture of the other women, but he could not. He turned his back and wept. He was taken to the Regiment Prison in Calama at gunpoint and given electric shock torture. The torments that followed included starvation, with his weight falling from 60 to 45 kg, and being shot at as he was forced to run. He recalled:

Every night guards would beat me up. Sometimes they would put me in blood-stained cells and make me clean them up. They would grab me by the hair and rub my face in my comrades blood … My limbs are scarred. I almost lost my right leg. They gave me injections of drugs to try and brainwash me.

When Salas was finally released, the CPSA’s journal, Red Tape, relayed Salas’s gratitude to the union. He was formally greeted by the joyous Executive Committee of the CPSA, providing a photo opportunity for the journal, which showed Salas relaxing with a drink with the committee.

Both the adopt-a-prisoner program and the demonstrations made use of an efficient strategy of ‘routinising’ Chile into the everyday working of the trade union movement. Of all the adoptions, the CCHR estimated that half were from trade union branches, and the rest by trades councils, students’ and women’s groups followed by church and school groups. Adoption measures, primarily letter writing, were indirect actions easily undertaken within union branch structures at little organisational cost; but that does not cheapen the feelings or intent of many trade unionists in this solidarity action. Adoptions made trade unionists feel as if they could alleviate the harsh conditions of those suffering in Chile, at least in part.

---

89 *CPSA-Sponsored Chilean Prisoner Released, 1978*, CSC, CSC/44/4, LHASC, Manchester.
90 Jose Gonzales Salas, in ibid.
91 Ibid.
92 ‘Our sponsored Chilean prisoner released,’ *CPSA Red Tape 1978*.
93 Ibid. Gonzalez Salas kept some sort of relationship with the union, speaking at their conferences, and so on. From Reg Williams (CPSA) to CPSA Branches, 24 November 1978, CSC, CSC/11/7, LHASC, Manchester.
94 By doing so, they perhaps used to their own benefit the tendency described by Max Weber of movements to routinise and bureaucratise. Pakulski, *Social Movements*, xvii.
95 *CSC Annual Report, 1976*. In 1975, the CSC and CCHR said there were more than 150 Chileans adopted by trade unions, trades councils, shop stewards and student unions. ‘At least 4 of these prisoners have been released and are now in Britain, partly as a consequence of their adoption.’ In 1976, 500 prisoners were adopted in the United Kingdom and 49 of those had been released. In April 1976, the CCHR reported that ‘currently adopted through us: 521 prisoners, adopted by 354 branches of 40 different labour movement and religious organisations’. In 1978 there were 410 prisoners adopted by trade union branches and church groups throughout Britain. *Report on CSC for LCS Political Committee, 1974*, CSC, CSC/1/6, LHASC, Manchester; *Chile Committee for Human Rights: Report on Adoption Scheme, April 1976; CSC-AGM 19.02.77 Minutes; CSC Annual Report, 1978*.
96 *Suggestions for Local Committees re: Trade Union Work, 1976*.
97 Ibid.
The adoption program appealed to the unionists on a personal level. For Pilford, speaking in 1975, it was as if he could see himself:

[L]ike most of you [I] was horrified when the news broke in ’73 when Aliendi [sic] had been murdered and thousands of our comrades who were in the Trade Union movement were slaughtered and their crime, [was] being like us, being politically minded, being involved in the Trade Union movement of fighting for rights to give workers decent homes and decent living conditions and a right for the things that we do every day and fight for.98

Chilean trade unionists were ‘just like us’. This personalisation was a similar tactic to the nineteenth-century socialist model of worker-to-worker solidarity, which implicitly emphasised the common long-term interests of class.99 If there was any self-subordination to the victim, it was apparent in the complete moral authority conferred to the prisoners. Their innocence, cooperation and political suitability were assumed. The rewards to the victims of the regime were great when there was a success: they gained freedom. The reward to trade unions, and the solidarity movement, was a boost in moral capital and strengthening of their organisational relationship.

Above any organisational gain, the plight of an individual unionist was above political difference. Everyone concerned with human rights could agree with the adopt-a-prisoner program. Who could not be moved by stories of burnt retinas, mutilations and dogs trained to rape?100 In this way the adoption program was a means of multiplying and solidifying solidarity.101 The CSC acknowledged that while the adopt-a-prisoner program was not vital to the campaign’s human rights work, it was ‘important for building the entire campaign, as was evident at the trade union conference’.102

The conference referred to was organised by the CSC in 1975 and was ‘the most constructive and important development yet in the trade unions on Chile’.103 Adoption of prisoners was one focus of discussion, and after the conference 60 new prisoners were taken on.104
2. A ‘roll call’ of the labour movement: Harnessing labour participation

Figure 2.7 Flyer for the Trade Union Conference on Chile, 1975.

Source: Solidarity with the People of Chile—A Trade Union Conference [flyer].
The organisation of the conference stemmed from a resolution at the 1974 annual general meeting of the CSC and thus even its inception starts in a typical procedural trade union manner.\textsuperscript{105} The conference that resulted was ‘the most important activity organised during the past year’ and was ‘a great tribute’ to the work of the executive committee.\textsuperscript{106} Gatehouse started organising in January 1975. This period coincided with the beginning of Ken Hulme’s time at the CSC, and with his enthusiasm the conference quickly moved from being affiliates only to a 444-unionist-strong conference in October.\textsuperscript{107} The TUC also called a conference on Chile in 1975, but it did not have anywhere near the attendance of the CSC’s Trade Union Conference for Chile.\textsuperscript{108}

It appeared the CSC had out-unioned the unions.

A set of papers was produced for each delegate of the CSC conference, including a draft declaration voted on in the final moments of the conference.\textsuperscript{109} The sheets were packed with information explaining the history and composition of the CSC, highlighting its strengths in trade union affiliations and its achievements, its current programs and available resources as well as detailed descriptions of what was currently occurring in Chile.\textsuperscript{110} There were also instruction sheets on practical things that trade unions could do, including the adopt-a-prisoner scheme,\textsuperscript{111} helping refugees in Britain\textsuperscript{112} and copper and wine boycotts.\textsuperscript{113} Harry

\textsuperscript{105} Minutes of the CSC Executive Committee, 24/3/75, CSC, CSC/1/6, LHASC, Manchester.
\textsuperscript{106} Annual General Meeting London. February 7 1976. Secretary’s Report; CSC Executive Cttee: 20th November—House of Commons, 1975, CSC, CSC/1/5, LHASC, Manchester.
\textsuperscript{107} Minutes of the CSC Executive Committee, 10/1/75, at Seven Sisters Road, CSC, CSC/1/6, LHASC, Manchester. The TUC also grandstanded their own contributions to the CUT at this conference. TUC, ‘Notes of Proceedings at a Conference on Chile held at Congress House’, 36.
\textsuperscript{108} The only speaker to overlap was Alex Kitson, who was chair at the CSC conference but spoke from the floor at the TUC conference. CSC Executive Committee Meeting held on Friday February 28 1975, CSC, CSC/1/6, LHASC, Manchester. The TUC conference was held on a weekday, which would limit rank-and-file participation. TUC, ‘Notes of Proceedings at a Conference on Chile held at Congress House’. Looking more broadly, the CSC conference drafted appeals and letters to Kurt Waldheim of the United Nations, Jim Callaghan (British foreign secretary) and the International Conference of Solidarity with Chile (Athens, 1975). CSC Trade Union Conference Saturday October 25 1975—SPECIAL APPEALS, 1975, CSC, CSC/11/2, LHASC, Manchester.
\textsuperscript{109} The declaration called for the British labour movement to get behind trade union boycotts, consumer boycotts as well as the adoption of prisoners. CSC Trade Union Conference Saturday October 25 1975—DRAFT DECLARATION, CSC, CSC/11/2, LHASC, Manchester.
\textsuperscript{110} CSC Trade Union Conference Delegate’s Briefing No 1: What is the CSC?, 1975, CSC, CSC/11/2, LHASC, Manchester; CSC Trade Union Conference Delegate’s Briefing No 3: What is happening in Chile? 1975, CSC, CSC/11/2, LHASC, Manchester.
\textsuperscript{111} CSC Trade Union Conference Delegate’s Briefing No 4: Adopt a Prisoner Campaign, 1975, CSC, CSC/11/2, LHASC, Manchester.
\textsuperscript{112} CSC Trade Union Conference Delegate’s Briefing No 6: Helping Chilean refugees in Britain, 1975, CSC, CSC/11/2, LHASC, Manchester.
\textsuperscript{113} Briefing Document on Copper Boycott August 1975, CSC, CSC/11/2, LHASC, Manchester; Briefing Document on Chilean Wine July 1975, CSC, CSC/11/2, LHASC, Manchester; CSC Trade Union Conference Delegate’s Briefing No 4.
Smith, national organiser for AUEW TASS, urged each delegate to return to their organisation, talk about Chile and ‘bring life and energy to the commitment of the approximately nine million trade unionists represented at the Conference’.

Kitson and Nicholson chaired the event, and Luis Figueroa (president, CUT) also spoke in addition to 24 speakers from the floor. There were 11 sponsoring unions, and the TGWU was the most notable absentee. Of course, the TGWU made it onto the flyer more prominently than the sponsorship list thanks to Alex Kitson’s position. Delegates were sent from 34 different unions, and of those, 17 had executive members present. On top of this, there were 35 trades councils and 19 shop stewards’ committees, making a total of 266 different organisations. The breadth of representation indicates the success the CSC had in channelling labour movement power and attention through their affiliation system.

The day was recorded and the findings published in a pamphlet called *Chile and the British Labour Movement*, and it was cheap to buy and distribute through affiliates. The CSC worked hard to gain maximum momentum from their organising.

Luis Figueroa and Pedro Cornejo of the CUT used the conference as an opportunity to thank the labour movement for its solidarity, actions and adoptions. Cornejo told of his stay in prison and indicated how moved he was by the trade union conference: ‘only through the kind of direct contact...

---

115 Tom Pilford, Alex Ferry (AUEW Glasgow), Brian Anderson (AUEW Liverpool), Jimmy Symes (Merseyside Docks Shop Stewards) and Harry Smith all spoke. CSC Trade Union Conference Saturday October 25—AGENDA, 1975, CSC, CSC/11/2, LHASC, Manchester; Annual General Meeting London. February 7 1976. Secretary’s Report. For a list of all speakers, see: CSC Trade Union Conference Report to Delegates no. 1 Attendance, 1975, CSC, CSC/11/2, LHASC, Manchester.
116 The sponsoring unions were Association of Cinematograph, Television and Allied Technicians (ACTT), Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF), Association of Teachers in Technical Institutes (ATTI), AUEW, AUEW TASS, NALGO, National Society of Operative Printers and Assistants (NATSOPA), NUPE, NUM, SLADE and SOGAT. *Solidarity with the People of Chile—A Trade Union Conference [flyer]*.
117 ACTT, ATTI, AUEW, AUEW TASS, CPSA, Musicians’ Union, NALGO, NATSOPA, NUGSAT, NUM, NUPE, NUR, NUS, Post Office Engineers Union (POEU), SLADE, SOGAT and Tobacco Workers’ Union.
118 Annual General Meeting London. February 7 1976. Secretary’s Report. NALGO sent the most delegates, with sixty-eight. Kitson said at the time that it was ‘something really new for a white collar union to be in the forefront in a cause such as this’. NALGO also made adoption official union policy. AUEW sent 56 delegates, AUEW TASS 17, TGWU 54, and ASTMS and ATTI sent 28 each. CSC Trade Union Conference Report to Delegates no. 1 Attendance; Chile Solidarity Campaign, *Chile and the British Labour Movement*; Tom Pilford: Chairman, Greater London Association of Trades Councils, 1976.
119 More than £300 was collected at the conference and each delegate was charged a £1 fee.
120 Chile Solidarity Campaign, *Chile and the British Labour Movement*; From Gatehouse to Editors, *Trade Union Journals & Labour Movement press re: Chile and the British Labour Movement*, CSC, CSC/11/2, LHASC, Manchester; *Trade Union Conference Report, 1975*, CSC, CSC/11/2, LHASC, Manchester. The success of the conference led to various others being organised by the CSC, the most prominent of which was ‘Bread, Work, Freedom’ (1979).
afforded by this conference can one get to know a class beyond the boundaries of nation, flag and language, and perceive the true nature of the international workers’ movement.’121

The internationalist rhetoric of the speeches temporarily united the attendees despite their local political differences.

The conference encompassed a range of ideological and strategic opinions among the trade unions. Some focused on socialism, while others openly admitted the reason for their involvement was a commitment to Christian values.122 For example, on the one hand Kitson said the job of the British trade unionists was limited to pressuring Jim Callaghan, the British Labour Prime Minister, to change government policy. On the other hand, some unionists wanted to fight fascism directly and bring the junta down.123 The conference was used as a way of airing ideological differences and managing that conflict without endangering or involving the industrial aims of the unions. The unifying internationalist rhetoric provided an umbrella that protected unions against the factionalist storm.

The organisation of the conference by the CSC repeated the strategy of routinising the Chile issue.124 Support and attendance were easy, resource-sensible actions for trades councils and unions to undertake. If international activity of unions is contingent on the sum of incentives, capacities and impediments to action, as Schmutte has said, the CSC was extremely successful in promoting action.125 They provided activities, such as this conference, that negated most impediments (lack of finance, lack of organising hours, lack of leadership) and made expressions of union internationalism easy. Conferences were a way of life for the trade union movement. After the unions agreed to the consensus of affiliation by joining the campaign, it was merely good trade unionism to send along delegates, just as the TGWU would send delegates to ITF congresses. The conference was an indirect action using a strategy of industrial national style, yet it was organised by a social movement that mimicked deep traditions. It exposes the overlap of the abstract models when applied to real-life examples of union–social movement interactions. Nothing is clear-cut.

121 CSC Trade Union Conference: Concluding speech of Luis Figueroa, President of the Central Unica de Trabajadores (CUT), the Chilean TUC, to the conference, 1975, CSC, CSC/11/2, LHASC, Manchester; Hand Written notes—Trade Union Conference 1976, CSC, CSC/11/4, LHASC, Manchester.
123 Ibid.
124 The campaign also did this with trade union publications. They took a very organised approach to ensuring that Chile was covered in trade union journals. See, for evidence: Chile in the Union journals, c1978, CSC, CSC/28/15, LHASC, Manchester.
The conference, and the other activities described in this chapter, fits neither the industrial national unionism nor the social movement unionism paradigms. Almost all Chile solidarity activities were organised, promoted and run externally to the trade unions by a social movement group. The CSC exploited the hierarchical, official, stratified and ingrained structures, procedures and habits of the trade unions in order to achieve its own goals. The actions in this chapter demonstrated the flexibility of the internationalist sentiment of trade unions. In contrast to the rigidity of the theoretical models of trade union action contained in scholarly descriptions, real events were capricious.

The next chapter discusses another institutionalised trade union action: the delegation. The industrial national nature of this delegation’s organisation did not mean it was independent of the social movement, but it did not mean it dominated the Chile discourse at the time. The rigid organisation of the delegation is contrasted with the efforts of one rogue individual. This individual had sufficient moral capital to act outside the hierarchy of the traditional labour movement.
No Truck with the Chilean Junta!

Figure 2.8 Jack Jones presents Luis Figueroa (CUT) with a TGWU mini banner.
Source: Chile Fights: Chile—Trade Unions and the Resistance II (London: CSC [Chile Lucha], 1975), 2.
This text taken from *No Truck with the Chilean Junta!:
Trade Union Internationalism, Australia and Britain, 1973-1980*, by Ann Jones,
published 2014 by ANU Press, The Australian National University,
Canberra, Australia.